

Good morning. My name is Jay Koolis. I am a lifelong resident of the state and a 30 year resident of Glastonbury. I am recently retired but for over 30 years I was a well respected Traffic and Intelligent Transportation System Engineer. My career allowed me to work on many planning, development and construction projects and work closely with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and various towns around the state as well as with a number of private developers. This gives me a very unique and comprehensive knowledge of the real estate development industry and our state.

That said I cannot tell you how deeply concerned how poorly our state has handled the issue of affordable housing. State Law 8-30g has begun the destruction of the very things that make our state the wonderful place it is to live and work.

I do understand that our state is facing an affordable housing crisis but I CANNOT condone what is nothing more than very bad planning. As an engineer I know the importance of good planning practices, however 8-30g is the exact opposite of that.

8-30g has basically given developers the right to build what they want, where they want. It has removed any and all local control and infringed on the rights of residents of our state to protect their home and property. That is wrong.

8-30g has resulted in numerous overly dense, poorly designed housing projects from being stopped. It has given us numerous cheap 5 story monstrosities of little architectural merit being crammed on tiny lots with inadequate parking and virtually no landscaping. These further exasperates already congested traffic conditions and unnecessarily burden infrastructure (water, sewer, electrical, etc.) not planned for such intense development. These buildings have marred many neighborhoods and created eyesores along our State designated Scenic Highway, the Merritt Parkway (see 5545 Park Avenue, Fairfield, CT). This is wrong.

What also bothers me about 8-30g is that it doesn't allow consideration of privately owned affordably priced housing. Prior to 8-30g many towns actively encouraged the development of affordable housing owned privately. That is also wrong.

8-30g unfairly impacts hard working property owners that likely worked very hard and sacrificed to buy. Despite what obviously biased studies of property values show, it is pretty simple logic that constructing a typical 5 story 8-30g apartment building negatively affects the single family homes next to it. I conducted a simple poll of posters on a real estate social media site. The poll asked posters which comparable home (size, number of rooms, number of baths, etc.) on comparable lots in comparable neighborhoods would they pay more for; one surrounded by similar homes or the other next to a 5 story apartment building. The results were very clear. As of February 25, 2023 the vote was 71 to 1 for the house surrounded by similar homes. Clearly this proves that every out of character 8-30g apartment building allowed to be built in our state has the potential to negatively affect innocent homeowners by reducing the potential value of what is likely one of their biggest assets. That is wrong. Very wrong.

8-30g also has wasted taxpayers money. Connecticut mandates that every town develops and updates every 10 years, a Town Plan for Conservation and Development. Those plans involve millions of taxpayers dollars and countless hours of residents time but they are rendered completely useless by 8-30g since developers do not have to meet any planning guidelines established in them. That is wrong and this is why 8-30g must be rescinded and any law like HB6633 stopped.

Among the many reasons HB6633 must not move forward are:

- It would further diminish local involvement and resident commitment to the town they live in.
- It requires towns to meet an unattainable and arbitrary mandate of 10% affordable housing units in a ridiculously short time of just 10 years. This would require a massive effort to build literally thousands of additional housing units almost immediately since towns would have to find a large amount of developable land that likely would not be for sale, purchase it, go through approval processes, design it and construction. It would be completely overwhelming to most, if not all towns.
- This rapid timeframe would also assure bad planning decisions are made. Dense housing could be built in places that would be better kept low density.
- HB6633 places a massive financial burden on communities by mandating town financial participation which will raise taxes and make communities less affordable.
- Finally HB6633 penalizes towns that do not meet difficult requirements which will create unnecessary animosity among town residents toward neighbors and the state.

Instead of these outrageous mandates that anger taxpayers and hurt property owners, the state should stop and rescind 8-30g. It should develop a new affordable housing initiative tied to good planning principles and with local input. This is the only way we can assure our state provides the best housing for all of its residents.

Furthermore I understand that there are a number of other proposals to modify 8-30g including HB5326, HB5783, HB5784, HB5785, HB5791, HB5793 and HB5794. I strongly urge our State Legislators to seriously consider these proposals and allow them to be publicly heard. That is the truly best way to solve our state's affordable housing problems. Thank you.

Jay Koolis
154 Lexington Road
Glastonbury, CT 06033
Koolisj@gmail.com
[860-987-7268](tel:860-987-7268)